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ABSTRACT

Ultimately, Hispanic Americans will choose whether they wish to become part of the larger American society, or remain separate from it, but public policy can and does influence that choice. Chapters 1 and 2 show how public policy in the form of two federal laws, the Bilingual Education Act and the Voting Rights Act, encouraged Hispanics to reject assimilation. Chapter 3 describes how the organizations involving in promoting policies favoring separatism evolved, and how groups outside the Hispanic community influenced the process. Chapter 4 considers the backlash that developed as Hispanic leaders continued to push for special treatment, including protected language rights for Hispanics. The second half of the book deals with the present conditions of Hispanics living in the United States. Chapter 5 shows that native-born Hispanics are moving into the economic mainstream and explains why most analysts fail to recognize this phenomenon. Chapter 6 describes Hispanic immigration patterns; and chapter 7 examines why Puerto Ricans are failing to advance, and what role public policy has played in discouraging Puerto Rican achievement. The concluding chapter outlines why Hispanics must adapt to a new politics of assimilation. Hispanics can mimic the success of other ethnic groups in becoming full participants in this nation, but only if they heed the lessons of the past. (SLD)

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